8/18/69

Dear Jim,

The New Orleans papers of the 14th and 15th have just arrived and I've read of the Sheridan decision.

If it is of value to you, you may recall that the day I appeared before the Grand Jury, 4/28/67, I went to lunch with Hoke, Sam and Ross. When I returned there was a message from Townley, delivered by Iris Nasty who waited for me, that he'd like to film and interview me, presumeably for their special. I phoned him, Lynn drove me there, he did film, in a disinterested manner, asked me to dinner with him and, when I accepted, took me to the Roosevelt to await a dinner companion. She is Judge Wisdom's horsey daughter, who just happened to hold us up two hours. We went to Brennan's, where, having been so long delayed, we arrived just in time to be seen (and speak to) Sheridan who, by the most natural of all the only-natural coincidences, just happened to be there, too (and working with him, of course, Townley knew nothing of Sheridan's plans). It is only by coincidence that Sheridan thus could confirm Townley if there were anything Townley were to later allege that I said or told him.

Rick, as had the others, protested you did not trust them and would not see them. When Rick said this I said I had no doubt he was under a misapprehension (as I had with the other three) and asked if he wanted me to set up a meeting. He pretended enthusiasm when he said he did. I spoke to you about all four, your saw the other three, and Townley never kept his appointment. I was in touch with him by phone when he didn't show up.

Rick told me he had hot stuff for you and asked if I'd deliver it. I agreed. He asked me to meet him at Barbara's. I had never met her. He gave me the full treatment in advance, about how she appeared kooky but was solid and dependable, what she said was gospel, etc. This was the last Sunday in April. She told me the story of the alleged content of one of Shaw's plays, the returned war hero who, as an act of final dedication, kills the President. She was loaded on Shaw, which made this seem credible. I returned to Barbara's with Dick the next night, to tape the same stuff. The first night he drove me to your home, from Barbara's, and I told you this story. Had you used this and the other things on Shaw, without checking them out, it would all have ended then. I went to considerable trouble to check out what might possible have resulted in a record, the sex-offense arrest in New York allegededly under the name of Claude Claycott. You will immediately recognize it as merely another of the undoubted coincidences that this cannot be checked out because in those years there were no central sex-offense records. Because of his warm endorsement and the large amount of collateral material Babbaba had I was quite willing to believe this. When we got to your home, I asked Rick to come in with me. There was then a guard, who came up to us and he identified himself. He declined to go in with me on the ground it might prove embarrassing to one of you. It was at this time I asked you to see Rick and you immediately agreed.

Neither WDSU nor NBC ever used the footage Rick filmed of me and I now doubt they ever intended to. Sheridan had earlier driven up to my home and spoken to me (I now believe he made a clandestine tape, for he didn't make one in the open, to which I'd have agreed, and no extensive notes, if any. He then said he'd be returning to film me for his special, but he never did and I was then less than an hour from his Washington office. Because his was a "New Orleans" special and he

also knew I had written OSWALD IN NEW ORLEANS, I do suggest his failure to interview me and Townley's to go into my New Orleans work and evidence is a fairly clear early sign they did not have the claimed objectives of free, honest and open news reporting.

When I later returned to New Orleans, among those I interviewed is John George Wyatt, who spent an entire night at my motel room, leaving about 5 a.m. I taped everything, with his permission, with the tape recorder open and the switch accessible to him. He laid out the whole story of which you know, the effort by Sheridan to corrupt him, with Hoke's and Barbara's in-between roles. Later, I spoke to both and each confirmed what he had said of their parts, quite emphatically. This tape seems to have disappeared from your office. I believe this meeting was in November 1967, when O in NO had just come out. It was, in fact, two full reels of .5 mylar, 5", both sides, a long, long interview. You may recall he produced several pictures taken when he worked on the "Sea Raider" and promised me he'd give Louis others he had then taken, but he never did because no one kept after him. (My thought was, could this have been the boat Hall said he expected to get in Dallas? He said it was owned by the kind of man who would have helped, a rightist extremist.)

When I returned again, JG and Morris were working in Baton Rouge and JG demurred when I asked to get together with him. I kept calling him from the motel, he kept being too busy to take the phone, and finally I heard his wife chiding him about not talking to me since clearly, I'd be calling back until he did. Reluctantly, he took the phone, and gradually I was able to warm him up. He then denied Sheridan, who was the finest of men to him, had anything to do with the effort to get him to give false evidence. He said it was that bad Townley, and that when Sheridan heard of it, that noble soul of his rebelled and he forthwith smote Townley on the wrist, tut-tutting as how neither ne nor NBC would every do anything like that. Bad, bad man that Townley, doing all these things, offering all that money not his, with no okay from anybody. Oh, was Sheridan ever dismayed at Terrible Townley and all those unseemly things he did try and do! Of this there is a clandestine tape.

And then Morris, You may remember I turned him on, too, and for a brief period he was saying a few things, until he got his job in Baton Rouge, I am almost certain the weekend I first spoke to JG. I am aware of the work he was doing on the cars that led to his arrest, for he told me of it and it kept us from continuing the interviews I had started. That week, when he was arrested in Baton Rouge, JG called me from there, full or anger at their arrest and telling me how he had been all wrong about Partin, who had personally given him the money to spring Morris. Fine man, that Partin. And it just happens that no sooner had JG told me CBS Baton Rouge was giving him time to respond to something Sheridan is said to have said, I spoke by phone to a Baton Rouge reporter (you have memo), who had been tipped off to all of this by Partin, who offered to hold the springing of Morris up until he could get there with a photographer. Moo will remember that at this time, when he and I alone were in Louis' office, a call came through from Sargeant Pitcher, who wanted to know what we knew of these two. I think he said they claimed to be working for your office. When SP spoke to me I told him they had just told me they were working from the legislative committee.

I still look forward to the return of those material I loaned and, no matter how late, the copies of the trial testimony of which I was promised copies if you ever got transcripts: Finck, Shaneyfelt, Frazier and any other feds. These are among the interrogations for which I primed your people with my unpublished and published work and other things from my files. If there is any you'd like me to read, I of course would be happy to.

Regards to everyone,